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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/755,661	01/12/2004	Liesbeth M. Longueville	02-510	9307

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CATERPILLAR INC.
100 N.E. ADAMS STREET
PATENT DEPT.
PEORIA, IL 616296490

EXAMINER

BROWN, DREW J

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3616

DATE MAILED: 10/02/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/755,661	Applicant(s) LONGUEVILLE ET AL.	
	Examiner Drew J. Brown	Art Unit 3616	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 8/21/06 (amendment).
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-14 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 12 and 13 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-3 and 6-11 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 4,5 and 14 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 1-3 and 6-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Richardson et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,617,929) in view of Palmeri et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,065,560).

With respect to claim 1, Richardson et al. discloses a device (10) configured to control select functions of a machine (16), wherein the machine includes an operator's station (Figure 1) including a seat (12). An interface module (38) has a connecting portion (47) and a working portion (42), wherein the interface module is adapted to shift the working portion laterally between a retracted positions and an extended position relative to the at least one armrest (column 1, lines 57-64).

Richardson et al. does not disclose at least one armrest being supportably positionable adjacent to the seat, wherein the interface module connecting portion is pivotally connectable to the at least one armrest associated with the seat in the machine. Palmeri et al., however, does disclose at least one armrest being supportably positionable adjacent to the seat (Figure 1), wherein the interface module connecting portion is pivotally connectable to the at least one armrest (via seat 12 of Richardson et al.) associated with the seat in the machine.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the invention of Richardson et al. in view of the teachings of Palmeri et al. to have an armrest attached to the seat so the driver can rest his/her arm when the interface module is in the retracted position.

With respect to claim 2, wherein in the retracted position (Figure 2 of Richardson), the interface module working portion is at least partially concealed by the at least one armrest and in

the extended position (Figure 1 of Richardson) the interface module working portion is substantially free from obstruction by the at least one armrest.

With respect to claim 3, Richardson et al. discloses that the at least one armrest has upper and lower surface portions and that the interface module working portion moves laterally between the retracted and extended positions along a first plane extending generally horizontally (column 1, lines 57-64) below the at least one armrest lower surface portion and at an elevational position sufficient that the interface module working portion is at least partially located below the at least one armrest lower surface portion when the interface module working portion is in the retracted position (Figure 2).

With respect to claim 6, the interface module includes a plurality of actuating devices associated with the respective machine functions (Figure 4), wherein the plurality of actuating devices are arranged on a surface of the working surface at respective locations selected to facilitate manual manipulation of the actuating devices.

Although Richardson does not disclose that the working portion of the interface module includes an upwardly convex generally ovoid surface, the working portion (28) of the interface module (20) of Palmeri does have an upwardly convex, generally ovoid surface.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the invention of Richardson et al. in view of the teachings of Palmeri et al. to have the working portion of the interface module include an upwardly convex generally ovoid surface, since it has generally been recognized that changing the shape of an element while performing the same task equally well involves only routine skill in the art.

With respect to claim 7, Richardson et al. discloses an interface module connecting mechanism (28) adapted to interconnect the interface module connecting portion and the at least one armrest (via seat 12).

With respect to claim 8, Richardson et al. discloses that the at least one armrest has upper and lower surface portions and that the interface module connecting mechanism includes a pivot pin (34) connectably engageable with the interface module connecting portion and the at least one armrest along an axis of rotation substantially perpendicular to the at least one of the armrest surface portions.

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With respect to claim 9, Richardson et al. discloses that the interface module connecting mechanism includes a linkage having a first end portion (36) connectable to the interface module connecting portion and a second end portion (32) connectable to the at least one armrest.

With respect to claim 10, Richardson et al. discloses that the linkage includes at least first (28) and second (30) link arms, wherein each of the first and second link arms are spaced apart one from the other (Figure 1) and have first end portions (36) pivotally connectable to the interface module connecting portion and second end portions (32) pivotally connectable to the at least one armrest.

3. Claim 11 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Richardson et al. in view of Palmeri et al., and further in view of Klaassen (U.S. Pat. No. 4,478,308).

The combination of Richardson et al. and Palmeri et al. discloses the claimed invention as discussed above and that a right-hand armrest includes an interface module having a right-hand configuration determined in response to the respective right-hand position of the associated armrest.

However, the combination does not disclose the same for a left-hand armrest. Klaassen does disclose that both right and left-hand armrests with corresponding interface modules can be used in the same machine.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to further modify the invention of Richardson et al. in view of the teachings of Klaassen to have a left-hand armrest and corresponding interface module in order to have more controls available to the driver.

Allowable Subject Matter

4. Claims 12 and 13 are allowed.

5. Claims 4, 5, and 14 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Response to Arguments

6. Applicant's arguments filed on 8/21/06 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

7. In response to Applicant's argument that there is no suggestion to combine the references of Richardson and Palmeri, the examiner recognizes that obviousness can only be established by combining or modifying the teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention where there is some teaching, suggestion, or motivation to do so found either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art. See *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071, 5 USPQ2d 1596 (Fed. Cir. 1988) and *In re Jones*, 958 F.2d 347, 21 USPQ2d 1941 (Fed. Cir. 1992). In this case, it is well known in the art that armrests are attached to seats in order to provide comfort for the occupants in the vehicle.

On page 9 Applicant argues that Richardson teaches away from providing an armrest because it would add stationary bulk between the driver seat and the passenger seat and would be a substantial obstacle that the driver or passenger must maneuver around. However, Figure 5 of Palmeri et al. shows that the armrest is pivotal and that it would not be an obstacle that the driver or passenger must maneuver around when in the upright position.

On page 10 Applicant argues that Klaassen does not cure the deficiencies of Richardson and Palmeri with respect to claim 1. However, the Examiner notes that Klaassen is only relied upon to teach that seats can include both left and right armrests.

Conclusion

8. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event,

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however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Drew J. Brown whose telephone number is 571-272-1362. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m..

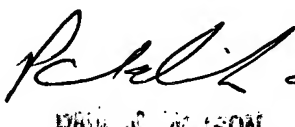
If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Paul N. Dickson can be reached on 571-272-6669. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Drew J. Brown
Examiner
Art Unit 3616

db

9/26/06

 9/27/06
PAUL N. DICKSON
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 1500